



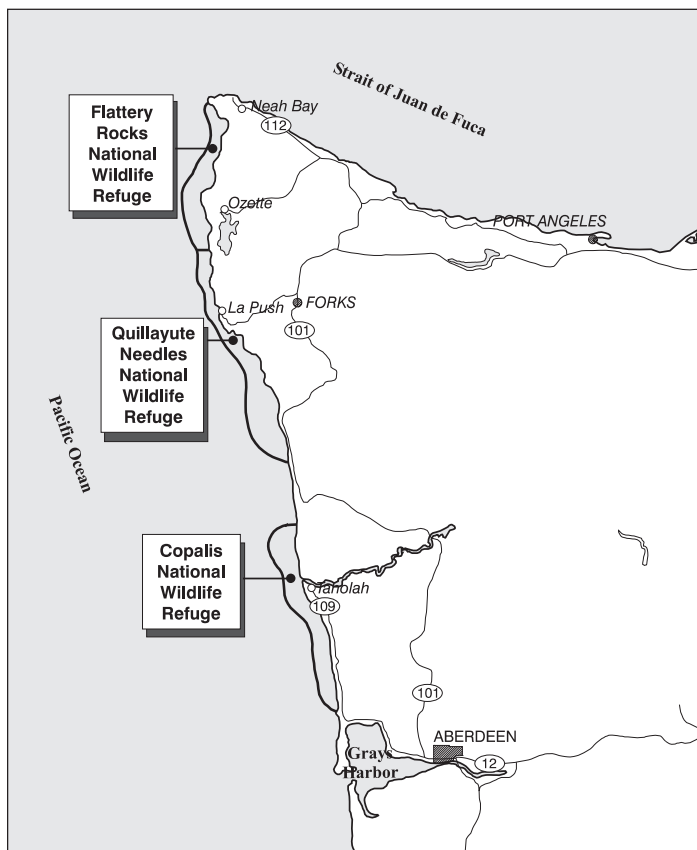
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Flattery Rocks, Copalis, and Quillayute Needles National Wildlife Refuges

March 2000 -Planning Update 1

In This Update:

Location map	1
About the Refuges	2
Who do you contact	2
Information on planning	2
Wildlife facts	3
Preliminary issues.....	3
Getting involved	3
Tentative schedule.....	4
Comment form	Insert



Washington Coastal National Wildlife Refuges. More than 600 rocks, reefs, and islands form the Flattery Rocks, Copalis, and Quillayute Needles National Wildlife Refuges. Map created by EDAW.

Flattery Rocks National Wildlife Refuge. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service seeks help in planning the future of this critical nesting and breeding ground for marine wildlife. USFWS photo.

Help Us Plan the Future

The rugged beauty of the seastacks and islands of the Washington Coastal National Wildlife Refuges provides some of the most recognized symbols of Washington State. Foresighted planning through efforts instigated by **Theodore Roosevelt on October 23, 1907** has protected these icons and preserved critical nesting and breeding grounds for marine wildlife.

Over the next year, interested public, agencies, Tribes, and organizations are invited to express their concerns and share their visions for the Refuges. This is your opportunity to help us identify issues and concerns, and for us to answer any questions you may have. Your participation is critical to the success of this planning effort. Share your ideas with us by answering the questions included in this questionnaire and **returning your responses by April 29.**

What are Refuges all about?

The National Wildlife Refuge System comprises the world's largest collection of lands set aside specifically for wildlife and provides important habitat for native plants and animals. National Wildlife Refuges are managed by the Department of Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing the nation's fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.

What Refuges are included in the planning?

The three Refuges being planned for are Flattery Rocks National Wildlife Refuge, Quillayute Needles National Wildlife Refuge, and Copalis National Wildlife Refuge. Extending for more than 100 miles along the outer coast of Washington State, they were established by Executive Order in 1907 for the purpose of **"... a preserve and breeding ground for native birds and animals."** **It was the original intent to preserve these islands in a natural condition and to minimize human intrusion.** As such, all islands are closed to public entry. In 1970, the Washington Islands Wilderness was established, which placed all the islands, except for Destruction and James Islands, under wilderness designation.

These Refuges are now part of the Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex headquartered in Port Angeles, Washington. For information on the Washington Maritime NWR Complex you can contact:

Kevin Ryan, Project Leader
Washington Maritime NWR Complex
33 S. Barr Road
Port Angeles, WA 98362
(360) 457-8451
(360) 457-9778 fax

What will planning do?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is starting work on a long-term management plan for the Washington Coastal National Wildlife Refuges. This plan, called a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), will serve as a guide for managing the refuges over the next 15 years. This is the first in a series of updates to keep you informed of the planning process for the CCP.

Why is this planning effort starting now?

In October 1997, Congress passed the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. This law establishes the mission of the Refuge system, develops a new process of determining compatible public use activities on Refuges, and requires us to prepare CCPs for each Refuge. The Refuge Improvement Act states that, first and foremost, the National Wildlife Refuge System must focus on wildlife conservation. The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is: ***"to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of America."***



Common Murres. Affectionately described as being the "northern penguin," common murrens crowd into densely packed colonies. USFWS photo.

Washington State's Last Frontier for Wildlife

At first glance, the rugged island Refuges appear inhospitable to animal life. A closer inspection reveals that thousands of seabirds cover the rocky pinnacles and circle the surrounding water and sky. During migration, seabird, shorebird, waterfowl, and raptor numbers on and around the Refuges can swell up into millions of birds.

The island Refuges are key to the continued survival of seabirds off the Washington coast. Approximately 80% of the seabirds in the State of Washington nest within Flattery Rocks, Quillayute Needles, and Copalis National Wildlife Refuges. The Refuges support twelve species of breeding marine birds: Leach's storm petrel, fork-tailed storm petrel, double-crested cormorant, pelagic cormorant, Brandt's cormorant, common murre, pigeon guillemot, Cassin's auklet, tufted puffin, rhinoceros auklet, glaucous-winged gulls, and black oystercatcher. The island Refuges also support bald eagle and peregrine falcon nesting sites. Besides birds, the Refuges are haul out sites for Northern and California sea lions, and harbor and elephant seals. River otters are residents on some of the islands, and sea otters use the surrounding kelp beds. One goal of the CCP process will be deciding how best to pass on this outstanding wildlife legacy of these Refuge islands to future generations.

What are the planning issues?

In preparing the CCP, a range of possible alternative management approaches will be explored. The effects of the various alternatives on the biological resources of the coastal refuges and on local communities will be evaluated in an Environmental Assessment, which will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

At this time, some preliminary issues identified include the following:

1. How can we eliminate or minimize disturbance to wildlife caused by low-flying aircraft, by people trespassing when rocks and islands are accessible during low tides, and by nearby boats (including kayaks and personal watercraft)?
2. What amount of research opportunities can the Refuges support without adversely impacting biological resources?
3. How will we manage invasive or exotic species?

4. What opportunities exist to cooperate with other agencies responsible for pollution threats, such as: plastic marine debris, oil spills, and other contaminants?

5. What opportunities exist for off-Refuge education/interpretation in cooperation with other agencies and Tribes?

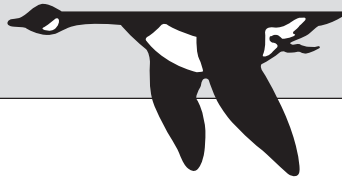
Do you want to get involved?

Your participation is critical to the success of this planning effort. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service planning team needs your help to identify issues. Your input will be used to create a meaningful and effective CCP for the coastal Refuges. Over the next year, additional planning updates like this one will provide information for those who chose to participate. The first step is for you to **complete the enclosed mail-in response form.**

Tentative Planning Schedule

Planning Update 1 issued	March 29, 2000
Mail-in response form due	April 29, 2000
Second Planning Update	October 2000
Public review of draft documents	October 2000
Final Planning Update	February 2000
Final documents and Notice of Decision	February 2000*

**Unforeseen circumstances could cause schedule changes. We will keep you posted if any major planning dates change.*



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Address correction requested